



## **ABSTRACT**

*The existence of public open space in the downtown area has a very important role in improving environmental quality and social communities. The availability of public open spaces in the area occasionally difficult in downtown, so it is important to plan public spaces that already exists is not lost due to lack of utilization of space for the people and the environment.*

*This research was conducted in the Malang Merdeka square. Condition of the Malang Merdeka square is now serve as a green open space in the middle of the city. The necessary arrangements for the physical establishment which can operate both as a green space and accommodate public activities in downtown.*

*This study aims to identify the use of public open space in the Merdeka square and find factors affecting it. Foundation theory used in this study is the theory of public open space, setting behavior, environment and behavior. The method used in this study was descriptive qualitative. The subject of this research is the user of Malang Merdeka square, with a purposive sampling technique, is used to determine the user's perception and cognition with the use of physical settings on the square. Regarding the activities of observation, methods of collecting data using place-centered mapping and person-centered mapping, this is done to understand use behavior patterns and utilization on the plaza setting in Merdeka square.*

*The results showed that the quality of the physical environment in a public space, influencing the patterns of utilization of user activity on the square. Many of the physical elements affecting the use of the public and open space that is vegetation, seats, space activities (square), accessibility and lighting. The results of this research can be used in formulating the draft directions (guidance) urban areas, especially in terms of preparation of physical settings to optimize the utilization of public spaces in urban areas.*

**Keywords :** *Public open space, utilization, physical setting, Merdeka square*